

WASHINGTON POST
12 July 1985ARTICLE APPEARS
ON PAGE **A-1**

CIA Aide, Ghanaian Face Spy Counts

Identities of Agents, Informants Said Given to Foreign Officials

By Joe Pichirallo and Caryle Murphy
Washington Post Staff Writers

A Central Intelligence Agency employee stationed in the West African country of Ghana and her Ghanaian lover were charged yesterday in an espionage plot in which authorities said the identities of CIA agents and their Ghanaian informants and other U.S. secrets were passed to Ghanaian intelligence officials.

Sharon M. Scranage, 29, a low-level support assistant in the CIA's station in Ghana, has admitted to the FBI that since December 1983 she provided confidential CIA data to Michael Agbotui Soussoudis, 39, a Ghanaian national, according to an FBI affidavit filed in federal court in Alexandria yesterday.

Soussoudis was arrested by FBI agents Wednesday night at the Springfield Holiday Inn, after being lured there by Scranage, who at that point was working with the FBI, according to sources. Scranage was arrested yesterday.

Sources familiar with the investigation said Soussoudis was Scranage's lover. In court yesterday, Soussoudis said he is related to Ghana's military ruler, Flight Lt. Jerry John Rawlings, a proponent of Third World radicalism who has become more allied with the West in recent years.

A prosecutor said in court yesterday "there is strong evidence that [Soussoudis] is an operative of the Ghanaian intelligence service"—a claim Soussoudis denied.

U.S. government officials yesterday were reluctant to discuss the extent of the damage resulting from Scranage's alleged disclosures, including possible harm to Ghanaians working covertly for the CIA, but one federal source said at least one of the CIA's Ghanaian informants is missing.

One intelligence source familiar with the investigation said Scranage's alleged disclosure of confidential CIA data is a "disaster" for CIA operations in Ghana. "It's very bad. It broke up all our agents in Ghana," the analyst said. "It tells people in Africa 'Don't work for the CIA.'"

As recently as February, according to FBI court documents, Scranage provided Soussoudis with the details of the CIA's Ghanaian intelligence-gathering operations, and last November Soussoudis allegedly asked her for copies of secret Ghanaian government information the CIA obtained so that "he could apprehend these individuals [the CIA's Ghanaian informants]."

Scranage first began cooperating with the CIA after agency officials became suspicious of her activities upon her return to this country from Ghana several weeks ago, sources said. The CIA turned her over Monday to the FBI, which has responsibility for investigating espionage cases, and set up the Wednesday night arrest, which occurred without incident when Soussoudis entered the hotel lobby.

Sources said that FBI agents and U.S. marshals took precautions to make sure that Scranage and Soussoudis did not run into each other when they appeared for separate hearings yesterday in Alexandria before U.S. Magistrate W. Harris Grimsley. FBI agents kept Scranage away from the building housing the magistrate's courtroom

until Soussoudis' hearing was over and he was taken from the building.

Then Scranage, escorted by FBI agents, walked into the building. When a reporter shouted, "Why did you do it?" Scranage, a short, plump woman with clipped hair, lowered her head and began weeping.

Grimsley ordered both Soussoudis and Scranage held in custody without bond after Assistant U.S.

Attorney Justin Williams argued that the serious nature of the charge justified such an action. Both are accused of conspiring to commit espionage, a crime that carries a penalty of up to life in prison.

"I am not associated with the intelligence service of Ghana," Soussoudis said.

"I am just related to the head of state, that's all. I do not work for the government of Ghana."

Soussoudis said that he has lived in the United States off and on for 10 years and currently is a self-employed business consultant. He asked for a court-appointed lawyer, saying that he lacked the funds to hire an attorney. Grimsley granted his request after questioning him about his finances. Soussoudis, who is divorced, gave an address in Queens, N.Y., as his residence.

During her hearing, Scranage, who has worked for the CIA for about nine years, said she earned \$22,000 a year from the agency in Ghana, and has \$8,000 in her savings account. Grimsley appointed J. Frederick Sinclair, an Alexandria lawyer, to represent her.

Friends and relatives described her as a serious and friendly person who was close to her family and very religious. A native of Fredericksburg, Va., she graduated from King George High School in 1974 where she was a member of the National Honor Society and a varsity cheerleader, according to a longtime family friend. She began working for the CIA shortly after she graduated with a degree in secretarial science in 1976 from the National Business College in Roanoke. She is divorced.

"I feel terrible about it," Scranage's mother, Mary, 61, said in a telephone interview yesterday from her home in Dahlgren, Va. "I'd describe her as a lovely, sweet girl."

Continued

2.

I never had trouble with her." Mary Scranage said her daughter was the second of three children and had been living with a sister in Alexandria. Scranage's father is a retired heating mechanic who worked at the U.S. Naval Service Weapons Center in Dahlgren and at the U.S. Marine Base at Quantico.

The Rev. John Chapman, pastor of the Greater Little Ark Baptist Church in King George, Va., the Scranage family church, said yesterday that he has known Scranage since she was a child and was shocked by the news of her arrest.

"She's very truthful, and loyal to her family and to her country . . . I think she was taken advantage of," said Chapman, who described her as naive and unsophisticated.

A government source familiar with the investigation said that there are no present indications that Scranage received any money in exchange for the information she provided. The source said she did it as a favor to Soussoudis.

"She got wrapped up in something that got away from her," the source said. "She got trapped and afraid."

Scranage met Soussoudis in Ghana in December 1983 and soon began providing him information about Ghanaian nationals who were secretly helping the CIA gather data about Ghana, according to the FBI's affidavit.

Scranage also gave Soussoudis information from classified CIA cables about an unidentified Ghanaian group's request for military equipment from Libya, the FBI said.

In May, according to the FBI,

Scranage compiled handwritten lists of the identities of CIA Ghanaian informants, known as "assets" in the intelligence community, after lifting them from confidential CIA records.

On May 24, Scranage, accompanied by Soussoudis, met with Ghanaian government representatives, including a Ghanaian security official, and repeated to them the secret information she had previously given Soussoudis, the FBI said.

Scranage told the FBI that during the meeting she spotted the notes she had given Soussoudis in the hands of the unnamed Ghanaian security official.

At that meeting, the security official also asked her to obtain, from CIA files at the agency's headquar-

ters in Langley, Va., the identities of three other CIA Ghanaian informants traveling outside of Ghana, according to the FBI.

She was told to give the information to Soussoudis, who would meet her in the United States.

U.S. government officials are nervous about possible repercussions from yesterday's arrests, but some foreign policy analysts said Rawlings' need for continued aid from the West, including the U.S., may mute his response.

Staff writers John Mintz, Mary Thornton and Joseph E. Bouchard also contributed to this report.

CIA EMPLOYEES CHARGED WITH SPYING AGAINST THE U.S.

■ **David Henry Barnett:** A former covert CIA agent in Indonesia, Barnett was charged in 1980 with selling the Soviets the identities of CIA agents in Indonesia and the identities of Indonesians cooperating with the CIA. Barnett, who left the agency in 1970, began spying for the Soviets after having financial problems in private life. He pleaded guilty and was sentenced to 18 years in prison.

■ **William P. Kampiles:** In 1978, Kampiles was arrested and charged with selling the Soviets the top-secret manual for the U.S. KH-11 spy satellite for \$3,000. Kampiles spirited the manual out of CIA headquarters while employed as a clerk there. He was convicted and sentenced to 40 years in prison.

■ **Karl F. Koecher:** In 1984, Koecher, a former contract translator for the CIA, was arrested in New York City on charges of supplying U.S. secrets to the Czechoslovakian intelligence service. He is still awaiting trial.

